5:Mehra E-5 (no date) 1956 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

is surrounded by a series of concentric circles as it were, on the outside is a wide road where fairs are held and much commerce goes on on festive days. The low castes cannot go beyond this outer fringe. Lodged within, is the garden where the snakes are to be seen in their natural habitat. In this area is a sacred tank, the water of which is rather dirty due to falling vegetation, but which is reputed to be medicinal in property. Here too is a very large vessel into which milk is poured by the priest so that the snakes might be well fed. Within this belt of vegetation and bushes is the shrine itself. There is a verandah with a central hall called *mandapa* with an open space in front, and in the centre is the platform where the snake deities are enshrined. There are two images here, one of Nag Raj with five heads and the other of a serpent with only one head. This is the inner sanctuary where only the priest enters. In Manarsalil temple a virgin priestess conducts the most sacred rites and is considered to be the guardian of the serpents.

A similar position pertains among the Meitheis of Manipur, where a priestess looks after the serpent god called Pak-hangba.[5] Near the verandah is a sacred well from which water is drawn as offering to the deities and is afterwards distributed to the devotees as holy water. It is believed that only pious people can see the snakes in the forest and the wicked cannot. The devotee considers himself blessed if he is able to catch a glimpse of the snake while on his way to the temple.

The common private snake shrine in Travancore lies within the compound of the house, often near the boundary, and away from the main building, in order to best preserve its sanctity and to avoid accidental pollution by inadvertent trespass by some members of the family. The abode of the snake god is called *sarpa kavu*, and this is usually a raised patch of land surrounded by bushes and trees. In the foliage there must be a plant yielding milky sap and in the absence of such a plant, one is planted near the shrine. The trees near the shrine are never cut and the area in the vicinity of the *sarpa kavu* is kept very clean. Often granite images of many-headed snakes with spreading

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

and other female friends of the girl then approach, and give sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, and after taking their meals together from the same leaf, they proceed to the pandal, where a cloth is severed into two parts, and each part given to the Manavâlan and girl separately in the presence of Enangans and other friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce."

If, as has been said, the "páttu" sung by the Brâhmani, in "*Rig Vêdaswaram*" is in substitution for the Vêdas sung at the Nambûtiri's wedding—because the Vêdas cannot be used by any but Brâhmans—this part of the ceremonial seems to indicate imitation of the Nambûtiris. The Brâhmani is not however a "Brâhman lady" but merely represents one. In North Malabar she is of the Nambisan caste.

The ceremony is much more analogous to that obtaining in the Bellary district and round about it, through which women, called Basivis, are, after an initiatory ceremony of devotion to a deity, compelled (under certain conditions) to follow no rule of chastity, but whose children are under no degradation, than to the initiation of the Dêvadâsi in her career of harlotry.* It must be said, however, that the ceremony, more especially as modified by poor people, when the Manavâlan is represented by a clay figure adorned with flowers, the handiwork of the girl's mother, looks very like it. But what demands consideration now is the position of Manavâlan to the bride. Does the ceremony confer on him any of the rights of a husband? There is much diversity of opinion on the point. Some say it does, while some say it does not. It seems certain that, as a rule, there can be no cohabitation between the two as a mere corollary of the tâli-tying ceremony. Should there be three girls in a family, *i.e.*, in the same taravâd house, aged, say, 9, 5 and 3, the ceremony is always done for all three at the same time. The only condition as to age of the girl is that the ceremony must be done before she reaches puberty. The bridegroom (to call him so) is selected after consulting agreement between his horoscope and the girl's. He is seated beside her in the marriage pandal, and he invests her with the tâli. They eat of the same plantain leaf (used as a plate throughout Malabar). They are placed in the same chamber, to go through the fiction

* An account of the Basivis, their devotion to deities, etc., by the writer will be found in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," Vol. II., 6 (1891).

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which, simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely 611 difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

001 Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

"A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh [564] month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do [184] class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning; and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important cere- 613 mony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, per- [787] formed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is [824] fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morning of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd*. At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

the couch on which the Nâyar has his oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat.* Lying on her back, her head is raised and the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling, by way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste."

DEATH AND SUCCEEDING CEREMONIES.

When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, when the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi plant, into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring; the idea being that the water should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin, (a Râsi fanam, if one can be procured †) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed, and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house) where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and while it is in this room, whether by day or by night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the Taravâd holds the head in his lap and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead.

As the Malayâlis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of a Taravâd, male or female, are burned; those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all persons who have died of cholera or small-pox.‡ When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house if there is one (there always is

* Every Nâyar, and for the matter of that, every Malayali, has an oil bath about once a week or as often as he can afford. The person is well shampooed with gingelly oil.

† These are now rare.

‡ It is the same amongst the Khonds of Ganjam.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

When the cremation has been done by night, the duty of Sêshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M. and is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11 and it continues for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male members of the Taravâd younger than the deceased go together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house, where there has been placed ready by an Enangan—(one of the Taravâd—of the same clan or sub-clan as that of the deceased : marriage must be admissible between the two Taravâds)—some rice which has been half boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherûla,* some curds, a smaller measure † of paddy, and a smaller measure ‡ of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it knotted ; the knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice and other things are offered to this. The belief concerning this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus : There are in the human body ten humours :—Vâyús ; Prânan ; Apânan ; Samânan ; Udânan; Vyânan ; Nâgan ; Kûrman; Krikalan ; Dêvadattan ; Dhananjayan. These are called Dasaváyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these excepting the last, were destroyed by the fire. The last one flew up and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brâhman sages who, by means of mantrams (magic), forced it down to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought that, by making offerings to this (Dhananjayan) leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the Taravâd.

The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has been cleaned carefully, and the leaf is fixed in the centre of this prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct

---

* Ærna lanata belonging to the natural order Acanthaceæ.
† An Edangâli : about the size of a quart.
‡ A nazhi : about ½ a pint.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

824 765 782 613

to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the Taravâd is ensured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them, plucked on their way back to the house, some grass (karuka pullu): they kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandalwood paste and leaves of the cherîla: the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making his offerings. The half-boiled rice is made into balls (pindams) and each one present takes one of these in his right hand and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, some lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing.

The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and he has had the piece of iron (usually a key) in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony which has just been described. Now, when it has been completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated. The balls of rice (pindams) are removed by women and girls of the Taravâd who are junior to the deceased. They

764 607

824 765 782 613 775 825 23 place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and leads the way to a tank, on the banks of which the rice is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering; but if somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away.

765 613 572 783 824 When the ceremony which has been described has been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During these seven days no member of the Taravâd goes to any other house. The house of the dead and all its inmates are under pollution: no outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days the Kâranavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses.

184 431 It is said that in some parts of Malabar the visitors bring with them small presents in money or kind to help the Kâranavan through the expenditure to which the funeral rites necessarily put him.

765 To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that on the third day after the death, all those who are related by marriage to the Taravâd of the deceased combine and give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours, who are invited, one man or one woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called Patni Karigi. On the seventh day a return feast will be given by the Taravâd of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.

783 Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no ceremony is observed; but the members of the Taravâd remain under death pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the Sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the Taravâd go to the place of cremation and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried—not burnt by fire in the usual way—cover up

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796
539

At noon of Attam day a bamboo fresh sprouted, and therewith we made us a good fish trap.
And when to the tank a fishing we went, we baited a minnow.
By its tail did we hold it, on the *bund* did we dash it, and of cocoanuts, with milk full, eighteen we ground.
With elephant pepper we dressed it; with asafœtida we filled it, right up to the elephant's head.
Freshen up, flowers, oh freshen for me.

796
824

Having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the little children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M.; and then the daily decorations begin. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers and one or two varieties of foliage of differing tints are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. Among the flowers that contribute to the exquisite design may be named the common red, as well as the rarer variegated, lantana, the large red shoe flower *(Hibiscus rosa sinensis)* an indispensable feature of the cultivated vegetation in a Malayali's homestead, the yellow marigold, the yellow aster, the scarlet button flower, the sacred *tulsi (Ocimum sanctum)*, the wee, modest *thumber* (a vermifugal member of the Nepetæ tribe), the common *tagara* (yellow wild Cassia), the beautiful bluebell, and another common species of Cassia which the natives call the "Ônam flower." In addition, various little violet and purple wildlings that adorn the margins of rice fields, and beautiful specimens of the lily and allied orders of tropical plants are requisitioned by the weavers of these remarkably handsome, but, alas, quickly perishable, carpets. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal, hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork. This object is peculiar to the naturally well favoured province of Kéralam; and it serves to remind us that the people who possess the refined taste to produce such a pretty work of art must have long enjoyed a very high order of civilisation."

796
431

It has been noticed already under description of Nambûtiri Brahmans (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1), that the cloths given as "Ônam presents" are yellow, or some part of them is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic of sunworship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. It is a harvest

796

754 persons have the evil eye by nature. Potta Kannu, blind eye it is called. A person having the evil eye may, while *thinking evil*, infect man, woman or child by simply looking at them. Those who have the evil eye are generally women: men rarely. The cause is in the eye itself. No evil spirit is in any way connected with it. A woman may affect her own child. A person having the evil eye, looking at a beautiful or a healthy child, will affect it without intending to do so. The injury done through the eye is often unintentional. The power of the eye to do mischief is altogether beyond the volition of its possessor; but it is excessively virulent when mischief is really intended. Colour of the eye matters nothing. Nor is possession of the evil eye confined to [564] any caste. He knew a Nambûtiri who had it. The effect of it on a child is that it becomes lean, feverish, loses its well-favoured appearance, and cries in its sleep. Men and women suffer from headaches and pains in the limbs. Animals are disposed to lassitude and eat little. Cows will not give milk.

791 The Malayan drives away all these unpleasant ail-
755 ments by invoking an evil spirit Vuḍikandan by name:
[776] male, having no wife. By means of magic he *forces* Vuḍikandan to do what he requires of him. But how? The process he would not tell. It is secret. That is, all but the drumming. No one outside the Malayan caste may be initiated into the fearsome mysteries. The spirit Vuḍikandan is used for no other rite. The Malayan also drives out evil spirits.

755 Châtu presented me with a mantram, a magic verse,
[824] written with a style on a cadjan leaf, the common
[212] stationery of Malabar, and told me that whenever any part of my person becomes affected by the evil eye, I should whisper the mantram over a piece of string and tie the string round my leg, or other limb or part of the body which suffers, and cure will take place instantaneously.

He works by day: never by night. A whole day is occupied in driving away injury through the evil eye in a bad case. He need not be starving; in fact has a good meal before he begins. The generous Châtu presented me also with a couple of mantrams such as would cure an easy case of harm through the evil eye, and explained their use.

[539] (1) "Ôm: Namo: Bhagavatôm Srîparamêsvaranûm Srî Pârvati yum Pallivêṭa Nâyaṭinnâî Ezhunellumpôl Srî

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

754
795 until she is allowed to go out. Once out, she rushes like
564 a mad thing into the arms of the Ôḍiyan. He takes her by the hand and leads her to the courtyard or outside it. At once she is stripped naked. The choru kindi (blood—vessel: the shell) being placed near it, the womb expands, and the fœtus is easily removed in a moment.
● [824] A few leaves of the mailôsika plant (Polycarpæa spadicea*) are placed as was the other instrument of magic, and the womb contracts to the normal dimensions.

No wonder the Ôḍiyan is feared. By means of this *pilla thilum* he may render himself invisible; in fact he is able to do anything, according to popular belief.

SPIRITS, EVIL AND BENEFICENT, HOW SUBDUED.†

776
789 A regular working magician tells us something more of these. The most important of the evil spirits (Dûr murti) are—

Karinkutti.
Kuttichchâttan (we have met him before).
Mâranakutti.
Kallâti mûttam.
Parakkutti.
Ôḍikkutti.
Kuttu bhâiravan.
Bhâiravan.
Vanni bhâiravan.
Chotâla bhadra kâli.
Dûmapâti.
Narasihmamûrti.
Kâla bhâiravan.
Ôḍi bhâiravan.

Nearly every man, woman and child in Malabar wears some protective charm against evil spirits. Such charms are also very commonly tied round the necks of cattle, goats and even dogs.

Here follows the recipe for subjection of the spirit Karinkutti into one's service. Of course each spirit is treated always in a totally different way. First you bury a dead black or reddish buffalo. You must not catch your buffalo and kill him. You must find him dead. If you say this is far from easy, I can only remark that the subjection of an evil spirit is not an easy matter. Having buried your buffalo—assuming for the moment that you are a magician, such as the instructions are intended for—you bathe, and while your cloths are wet and clinging to your body, draw the figure chakram, which corresponds to a magic circle, on the ground over the buried buffalo. The

* I am not sure that the correct name is here given for this plant. It may be Alpinia Allughas, the aromatic rhizomes of which are used by natives medicinally.

† For this note, too, I thank Mr. Balakrishna Nâyar.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

Rangachari (1909, V, p. 320), reports that in Travancore, the 'leading villager' gave his consent and received gifts from the bridegroom 'as if to recompense him'. This recalls the statement of one informant of Pālakkara, who said he had heard a rumour that in ancient days, the Aṣān of the village had the right to deflower retainer-Nayar women, a right which he might forgo on payment of a sum of money.[1]

588 824 831 The *tāli* is, as Thurston & Rangachari observe, shaped like a leaf of the *Ficus religiosa* (pipal) tree (*aswatha*). This tree is worshipped by Nayars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil Brahmans as an embodiment of the Sanskrit god Vishnu. It is said to symbolize male creative power, the female tree with which it is associated being the *reppu* or margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*).[2] In the Tamil country, the two trees are frequently planted together in a mock-marriage ceremony, so that the creeping stems of the margosa may twine round the pipal tree like the arms of a faithful wife round her husband. Among Nayars, Tiyyars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil Brahmans, barren women are counselled to march a hundred and eight times round the ficus tree to obtain children. We are therefore probably justified in regarding the *tāli* as a phallic symbol, presented to the bride as a sign 'that she may now do what she pleases'.[3]

588 Innes (1908, p. 174) and Krishna Menon (1894) reports that, traditionally, the bridegroom's party approached the house flourishing weapons and shouting a war-cry. Later, before tying the *tāli*, the bridegroom laid his sword across his lap, and the girl took an arrow and a mirror in her hand. Mateer (1883) says that in Travancore, if the family were too poor to perform the ceremonies, the girl's mother might tie her *tāli* before a sword or a clay idol representing Kāma Devan, the Hindu god of passion.[4] Similarly, since the traditional ceremony died out, many Pālakkara mothers take their immature daughters to some Brahmanical temple dedicated to Vishnu (the god of marital and domestic prosperity) and themselves fie the *tāli* before the god.

588 593 Fawcett (1901, pp. 229–32) observes that the girl's brother carried her into the marriage hall from the house, bore her three times round it, and seated her to the left of the bridegroom; Innes (1908, p. 174) remarks that she might be carried there either by her brother or her *kāranavan*. On the fourth day, after their bath, the couple returned to the girl's ancestral house to find its doors shut against them. The bridegroom must force open the doors before he could take his seat with his bride in the kitchen where they ate a meal together. Alternatively, he might enter the house last in the procession, when boys of the girl's lineage pelted him with plantain fruits, which he must ward off with his shield.

613 According to Innes (*ibid.* p. 173), before the rite the girl was secluded for three days and nights in an inner room of the house, with a brass hand-mirror in her right hand, an arrow in her left, and the eight auspicious objects before her. On the second morning she went to the bathing pool, on the bank of which she must, after bathing, jump thrice over a brass vessel of water with an unhusked coconut on top, overturning both at the third time.

588 813 564 184 833 I turn to the rite in the royal lineages. In the Cochin lineage, which prides itself on ancient, 'true' Kshattriya descent, the rite took the form of a Brahmanical marriage ceremony with Sanskrit *mantras* from the Grihya Sutras. It was performed separately for each girl before puberty by a Nambūdiri, who must actually deflower the girl on the night of the ceremonies. The bridegroom received a fee and departed after four days. The girl might then cohabit

[1] Dr Aiyappan (1932) similarly reports that the Aṣān in some areas deflowered Nayar women at a ceremonial initiation.

[2] For a discussion of the symbolic significance of this tree see Dubois (1906, p. 652).

[3] My interpretation of the *tāli* as a phallic symbol is the more likely in that among Tamil Smartha Brahmans of Tanjore, the marriage *tāli* bears engraved upon it a *lingam*, the phallic emblem of Siva.

[4] This modern rite recalls the ceremonial marriage of the Devadasis (temple-dancers and prostitutes) in the Tamil country, in which the dedicated girl's *tāli* is tied by the temple priest before the god of the temple, or, if a girl fails to become dedicated to a god before puberty, by her mother in the presence of a sword. The 'marriage' is followed after puberty by the nuptials, at which a wealthy high caste man of the neighbourhood passes the night with the girl as the first of her lovers.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
301 called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
789 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament. The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil spirits.[1]

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
[824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars), betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving
262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
[123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
[613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
[782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
[783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

[241] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea
[114] that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

291 184 richer classes go in for Benares silk. This is wound round the loins and extends to the feet. The upper part of the body is seldom covered by the commoner folk, though most of them carry a second piece of cloth with them. Among the titled classes of the Nāyars it is customary to put on a long piece of laced muslin on the upper part of their body.

Mostly the Nāyars go barefoot, though expensive and elaborately-made sandals are used by the richer classes.

824 302 *Scents, Flowers, etc.*—The Nāyars use a lot of scented things. Sandal-wood paste, which has a beautiful aroma, is generally used on various parts of the body. Musk is also used, generally by ladies. Jasmine is the favourite flower. It is worn in clusters by women in their hair. It is very difficult to find an old Nāyar house which has not got a jasmine plant in its garden. Its scent is delightful, and when strung together as a garland it makes the most delightful, as well as the most welcome, present to a lady. Jasmine is also strewn in the bridal bed.

415 412 326 *Household Utensils.*—Household utensils, plates, pots, etc., are mostly made of bronze. Very few Nāyar families have got what is spoken of as household silver. The material they use is generally made with great taste, but the praise for this does not belong to them. The workers in bronze are hereditary craftsmen. Their life is devoted to designing and making these things, and naturally they have acquired great efficiency in it. The only praise that the Nāyars deserve for using them lies in the fact that, in spite of a strong temptation to go in for aluminium ware, which is much cheaper, they persist in using the costly, but better made and more artistic bronze things.

121 178 What is the future of this people? Will they become patrilineal and merge into the vast ocean of Hindu population, or will they remain matrilineal, while adjusting their social relationships and economic organisations to suit the changing conditions of life in India? Will they break up their *Tharawad* (the joint family) and abandon the primitive system of classificatory relationship? These are questions difficult to answer, but some new tendencies may here be noticed.

178 611 One thing I must say to start with. There is no chance of the system of matriliny undergoing any fundamental change in Malabar. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the economic interest is too large to submit to any change in the order of things dictated by purely theoretical reasons. Even if we could establish that the patrilineal system of life is superior to the matrilineal, the change from the latter to the former would not take place in Malabar, because it would mean a social revolution of some magnitude. Secondly, as long as there is the Brahmin marriage system it is not only the Nāyars that are interested in its upkeep, but also the Nampudiris.

178 564 Another reason is this. There is in Malabar what may be called a strong caste war. There is first of all the Nampudiri class, mostly landlords with great social and religious influence. Their rivalry is not of great importance. There are, then, the Nāyars. Thirdly, we have the Syrian Christians, who are an extremely intelli-

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

342 777 778 823

The construction of a house on the left or back of a Vishnu temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right side of a Sastha temple, will cause calamities to the occupants; but that on the opposite side will bring prosperity.

Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy flats, hermitages, the sea, hills, or cow-shed; if constructed near temples, they should be lower in height than the religious edifices.

342 823

Houses, constructed on a dry-land (*paramba*) with an elevation to the north-west, will last for eighteen years; and if on an elevation towards the east, south and south-east, a hundred years; if, however, they are built on a ground with an elevation to the north-east, they will last for a thousand, if to the west, twelve years, and to the north, eight years. Houses built on grounds sloping to the north with *athi* (Ficus racemosa) near them, those sloping to the east with *arayal* (Ficus religiosa) growing thereon, those with an inclination to the west, with Peràl (Ficus Indica) growing thereon, and grounds with *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

824 342 351 823

The following trees, namely, *elanni* (Mimusops Elangi) or *perál* (Ficus Indica) growing on the eastern side of a house, *athi* (Ficus racemosa) or *puli* (Tamarindus Indica) on the southern side, *arayal* (Ficus religiosa), *pala* (Echites scholaris) or milk plant on the west, *nága* tree (Trichosanthes anguina) and *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) on the north, will bring prosperity to the occupants. Jack and mango trees cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides of a house. *Arayál* (Ficus religiosa) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause it to take fire, while *perál* on the western side will give cause for fear from enemies. *Athi* on the northern side of the house will bring on abdominal complaints to the occupants. *Arayal* growing near a house must be cut off, unless the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. A cow-shed may be erected either to the east or the west of the main building; and a similar one to the south of it for bullocks and buffaloes. There are certain ceremonies performed both at the commencement of construction and at its various stages, as well as before the occupation of a house, a detailed description of which will be found in the account of the Brahmans. [1]

[343]

1. Chandrika.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the divorce of husbands (*sambandhakárans*), and the females in the family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adultery is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious, who steals her husband's property, who favours another than her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, who enters strange houses, should be put away even though she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her status in society.

Pulikudi.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during her first pregnancy. First during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she bathes and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi* (tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony performed for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike, on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy. An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of the *ambázha* tree (Spondias mangifera) on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour (*muhúrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing eastwards. The *Ammáyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisánkatti*) in his left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

843 The juice dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks [602] it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked [824] to pick one grain out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet is supposed to [574] declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and [787] friends of the family. The *enangan's* wife at the time pours oil over the head of the pregnant woman. If the oil flows on the left side, it predicts the birth of a female; if on the right side, a male.

844 When a Nayar woman is about to become a mother, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (*kattódom*), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The *kattódom* is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nayar woman has her oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat. Lying on her back, the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling by [564] way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste, who generally officiates as midwife, and in some places this duty is performed by a woman of the Vélan caste.

Childbirth.

846 Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths, washed and presented her by *Vannáthi* (a woman of the washerman caste). On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Athikurussi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*panchagavyam*) with gingelly seeds. Then the woman dips herself in a tank or river or sits on the ground near the bank, and a maid servant pours on her head the water from a vessel as many as [184] twenty-one times. This practice is not universal, though it certainly obtains in the State and in some parts of South Malabar and Travancore.

846 252 It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new born baby has also to undergo some rite of purification. The baby is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 184 [782] and dancing. This nightly routine of *pujas*, offerings, dancing, etc., is thus continued for the prescribed number of days.

[535] [776] On the morning following the last day, the votaries purify themselves by a bath and fetch branches of *pala* trees, and a dancing procession is organised, which wends its way through the Nayar streets, accompanied by the Goddess manifested through her *Velichapad*, to the temple of the Goddess, and from there disperse to their respective houses before evening after singing songs of praise and thanks-giving in honour of the Goddess. A pit, 15 feet long, 5 feet broad and 3 feet deep, is then made and filled with ten to fifteen cart-loads of fuel which is burned and reduced to glowing red hot charcoal. [787] [789] Here also is performed a *puja*. At about 4 A. M., the *Velichapad* through whom the Goddess manifests herself, the priests, the votaries, and lastly the caste-men, all walk over the fire several times.

[782] The day dawns and the senior member of the Porayattu family sitting on the stool consecrated to Bhagavati, and covering his head with the silk cloth of the deity, propitiates her with offerings of fruits, cocoanuts, and fowls. [753] [789] The whole ceremony is thus brought to an end. The object of this propitiation is to protect people from the attacks of cholera, small-pox, and other epidemics.

241 Agricultural ceremonies. Before closing this part of the subject, it may be noted that the agricultural year begins with the *Vishu* (first of Medam, about the middle of April) at which [787] the hot weather is supposed to terminate. In families where the members pursue agriculture as a profession, they send for the local *Kaniyan* (astrologer), who estimates by astronomical calculations the agricultural prospects and the probable quan- [824] tity of rain during the ensuing year. He is also asked to choose an auspicious day for ploughing, and on that day the master of the house goes to the seed-store with his Pulayan slaves and takes out a small quantity of each variety of seed, which he puts in a cup made of the leaves of the *kanniram* (nux vomica); he then places the cups in a basket near a lamp in the yard and places a small heap of rice around or near it. A new ploughshare fastened to a plough, and a pair of oxen are also brought, and these are painted with rice water. They are then taken in procession to the field, on reaching which the

1/2 [i.e., The Goddess Bhagavati -- Analyst]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

Pulayan head-man raises a mound of earth on which are thrown a little manure and a handful of seed. He then yokes the cattle to the plough and turns a square plot of ground, taking care to have furrows made in it, and the plough dropped on the right. Ganapati is then propitiated with offerings, and the master throws the seed in the furrow, when the Pulaya head-man invokes the blessings of the gods and the deceased ancestors on the seeds that have been sown broadcast, on the cattle that are let loose, and also on the members of the family, and prays them for a good crop, much sunshine, and a good harvest. A cocoanut is then cut on the ploughshare, and if the hind portion is larger than the front one, it predicts an excellent harvest. If the nut is cut into two equal portions, the harvest will be moderate; if the cut passes through the eyes of the nut or if no water is left in the cut portions, misfortune is foreboded. The portions of the cocoanut are then picked up with the milk inside them and a leaf of the *tulsi* plant (Ocymum sanctum) is dropped into each; if the leaf turns to the right, a prosperous harvest is assured; if to the left, the contrary. The ceremonial concludes with loud shouts and invocations to the gods of husbandry; and the unused seeds are distributed among the workmen.

Nira:—The bringing in of the first fruits (*Nira*) is celebrated at the end of Karkadagam (August), previous to which the doors and windows of the houses are cleansed with the leaves of a tree called *paragam* (Ficus hispida) and decorated with rice flour, while the walls are white-washed, and the yard smeared with cow-dung. On the gates of the houses are placed various kinds of flowers together with their leaves and branches, *viz*:—*athi* (Ficus racemosa), *ithi* (Ficus venosa), *arayil* (Ficus religiosa), *peral* (Ficus Indica), *illi* (young bamboo leaves), *nelli* (Phyllanthus Emblica), *jack* (artocarpus integrifolia), and *mango* (manganefera indica). On the morning of the ceremonial day, the priest of the temple comes out preceded by a Marar blowing a conch-shell, when a bunch of the ears of paddy already placed by the Pulayans outside the outer wall of the temple is taken by him to the temple with the same Marar blowing the conch. Every house-holder then sends out to the fields a man duly purified by a bath and smeared with ashes to gather some rice. As he brings it to

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

with the hand which is, in token of veneration, then raised to the head. Milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung are mixed together and used for purificatory ceremonies; and the images of gods are anointed with this holy mixture called *panchagavyam*. Small doses of it are even taken internally, and it is considered an antidote against poison, besides being prescribed as a *prâyaschit* or expiation for offences against caste, whereas the sprinkling of water mixed with dung removes sin or pollution from all persons, places, or things, and purifies them. The bull, the vehicle of Siva, is also held sacred, and a statue of it in granite is either placed in front of the image of Siva or in a separate shrine, and is worshipped as a God. The lizard associated with Siva, the monkey with Hanumán, the Garuda (the brahmany kite) with Vishnu, and the peacock of Subramania are a few of the other animals of Hindu veneration.

Of the birds of ill omen, one species of owl called *pullu* is much dreaded because of the belief that it causes an illness to children which results in emaciation. At the sound of its screeching, children are taken into a room to avoid its injurious gaze. Various are the propitiatory ceremonies performed by specialists to secure its good-will and to prevent its doing harm to babies; and amulets are worn by children as a preventive against its evil influences. Its hideous screeches are always associated with death.

Among trees, some are worshipped while others are used for *pûjas* or sacrifices. Among the former may be mentioned the pipal (Ficus religiosa), a tree which is held in veneration by the Hindus. Persons afflicted with maladies or whose planets are unfavourable, go round a pipal tree, seven, twelve, forty-one, or one hundred and eight times, muttering prayers and burning camphor and other incense at its foot or perchance engage Brahmans to do so, in the belief, that it will cure disease or counteract evil influences. The *vilva* (Ægle marmelos), whose leaf of triple form is supposed to represent the three eyes of Siva, and symbolise his triple function of production, destruction, and re-production, and the *tulsi* (Ocymum sanctum), which is sacred to Vishnu, are also worshipped. In front of every house, generally on the eastern side, or in the central yard of a quadrangular structure, is a stone or mud altar, on which *tulsi* or the *vilva* is planted and watered every day, and is worshipped by the inmates of the house. From

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

From the *tulsi* are also made rosaries, which, in addition to being an aid to prayers, are also used as ornaments for the neck. Among the trees used for *pújas* or sacrifices are the sandal-wood, the *pdsu* (Butea frondosa), the *rudrúksham* (Elæocarpus lanceolatus), the *darbha* (Poa cynosuroides), the *karuka* (Agrostis linearis), the *thumba* (Leucas Indica), *chembarutti* (shoeflower, Hibiscus Rosa sinensis), *erikku* (Calotropis gigantea), *thechi* (Chrysanthemum), and the several species of lotus and jessamine; and of these one and all are extensively used for medicinal purposes.

Folk tales.

The belief in demons and the habit of attributing all that cannot be easily accounted for to supernatural powers, have built up an edifice of folk-tales that would prove of great interest to students of folk-lore, some of which are given below:—

The eclipse is ascribed to the devouring of the sun or moon by the huge serpent Ráhu, and while it lasts, a kind of pollution is observed by the people, for during the period of eclipse, food and drink are supposed to acquire poisonous properties.

People who hear stories of Rámáyana, while lying on their beds, will become blades of grass in their next birth.

Will-o'-the-wisps are accounted for, as lights emitted by a kind of precious stone (*mdnikka kallu*) from the mouths of serpents, which, owing to their long life, are believed to have acquired the art of flying. Popular belief is that some serpents have been blowing for ages upon gold, embedded in the strata of the earth, and converting it into precious stones of the nature above mentioned. They keep them in their mouths, and acquire the power of flying in the air, with the stones shining brilliantly when they open their mouths.

When the crow and the fowl were first created, they were asked which they preferred, personal beauty or long life. The fowl preferred the former, and the crow the latter. Hence it is that the crow is said to possess a long lease of life.

The crow is supposed to possess only one eye, though apparently it has two. One eye-ball is said to move first in one socket, then into the other as necessity requires. The story is connected with a strange myth.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
A Wil Kerala A Wil
Nayar

539
[789] children. Tiger's whiskers have also the same efficacy against
[825] demoniacal influence. The flesh is eaten as medicine, while
[757] the skin boiled in gingelly oil and strained into the ear, removes deafness.

539 There is a common belief that, should the nest of a brah-
825 many kite be found, and one of the young ones be attached to it by a string; the squall breaks away, generally leaving a portion of the line attached to the nest as it becomes strong. The
[789] nest which is formed of sticks should then be thrown into a running stream, when, if any of the sticks that compose it float against the current, they will, on being applied to any fetters, cause them immediately to fly into a thousand fragments.

[171] The owl which is an emblem of wisdom in Europe, and the goose that of stupidity, completely change their respective places in the east, the former becoming a symbol of stupidity, the latter that of wisdom.

[787] The hooting of the owl heard at night, has, in all parts of the world and in all ages, been considered ominous of
[763] evil, and is consequently much dreaded. In Cochin, it is generally believed, that the hooting of an owl betokens an impending calamity or even the death of an individual near whose abode its loathsome cry is heard; and so, dwellers in the neighbouring houses at once turn out and drive it away.

824 Jack-o'-lantern:—These are called *Kollykutta Pisáchus*
539 (ghosts which emit fire from their mouths), and make their
[776] appearance on the side of tanks, rivers, and marshy places during rainy or foggy nights. They fly away or disappear at the sight of men and are much dreaded by the people.

Preëminent among the trees in the town of Cochin, and towering above all others along the sea-shore and sides of the back-water are the cocoanut palms (cocos nucifera linn), every portion of which, from the leaves to the roots, may be turned to some useful purpose.

[776] There is a tradition that the Raja of Benares, who was a stre-
[643] nuous worshipper of one supreme God, and rejected the custom of making offerings to inferior divinities, became, in course of time, almost equal to the Gods, and created many of the grains now in common use. As his powers increased, so did his ambition, and he meditated creating another species of human beings very superior to anything then existing in the world. But after he had completed its head, the demi-gods became alarmed and

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

prevailed on him to cease his work. The head was therefore transformed into a cocoanut which was henceforth to be one of the most useful of all trees in the vegetable kingdom, and was dedicated to Ganésa, the patron of science and learning.

Funeral customs.

The Nayars generally burn their dead bodies, while those of children under two or three years of age as well as those of persons who have died of small-pox or cholera are buried. When a Nayar is at the point of death, the members of the house-hold and friends who may be present, one by one, pour into his mouth a few drops of Ganges or other holy water or *kanji* water, from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the *tulsi* plant. While doing this, they hold in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring and the water is supposed to touch the gold, before it enters the mouth of the dying person. Sometimes, a *fanam* or gold piece is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed.

As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed and carried to the *vadakkini*, a room at the northern end of the house, where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor, and while it is there, a lamp is kept burning both day and night. One member of the family holds the head in his lap, while another the feet in the same way, and here it is that the neighbours come to have a last look at the dead. All the while, the names of gods or sacred texts are loudly recited in the hope that the soul may quit the world with recollections of God which would serve as a passport to Heaven. Immediately death occurs, the members of the house and the relatives assembled there burst out into loud lamentations, announcing the sad event to the caste-men of the village who attend at once. When preparations for the funeral have been made, the dead body is carried to the *nadumittam* or central yard of the house, or if there is no central yard, to the front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is then washed, anointed and neatly clothed, and the usual marks of sandal-wood paste and ashes, as in life, are made. The senior member of the deceased's family along with others including the sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and all the relatives, place new cotton cloths over the dead, and these are used for tying up the corpse before being taken to the cremation ground. Before removal, another ceremony called *Para Nirakkuka* (filling up *para*, a measure thrice the size of a gallon)

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round he dashes the pot on the ground close to the spot where the head of the dead had been placed. This circling round (*Kumbhapradakshinam*) is said to symbolize that the deceased has had his ablution in the water of the Ganges. Then the chief mourner and others bathe in a tank or river, perform an ablution of water (*Udaka-kriya*) to a piece of *karuka* grass stuck up to represent the spirit of the dead. A small image of the deceased is then made out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seed are offered. When this has been done, the relatives and the neighbours who have been there depart, taking care to bathe themselves before entering their houses.

The ceremony next in importance is the *Séshakriya* (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) which begins on the second day after death and continues for seven days, the particulars of which are as follows:—All the male members of the family, junior to the deceased, bathe and return home. The eldest of them who has the torn cloth and the piece of iron, together with the others, assemble in the central court-yard of the house, where there has been prepared by their *enangan* Chithayan, some boiled rice, a few gingelly seeds, a few leaves of the *cherula*, some curd, and a small measure of paddy, rice, and turmeric. All these are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp locally made. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger is taken, one end after being knotted, is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This leaf represents the deceased, and the rice and other things are offered to it. The following is the belief concerning the use of the palmyra leaf:—There are in the human body ten humours, *Váyus*, *Prinan*, *Apánan*, *Samánan*, *Udánan*, *Vyánan*, *Nágan*, *Kúrman*, *Krikalan*, *Dévadathan* and *Dhananjayan*. There are *Desavayus* or ten airs. When cremation was performed for the first time, all excepting the last were consumed in the fire, while the last flew up and settled on a palmyra leaf. This was discovered by some Brahman sages, who by means of *mantrams* forced it into the palmyra leaf. So it is thought that by making offerings to this leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be pacified.

The place where the leaf is to be fixed is first cleaned carefully, and the leaf is then placed in the centre of the prepared

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

824 765 782 613 surface. The men, when they return from their baths, bring with them some harialli grass (*karukapullu*); and making an obeisance with the right knee on the ground, they spread some grass near the strip of palmyra leaf, and rings made of the leaf are also worn by all those present. The eldest of the *anandaravans* or nephew then makes offerings of water, turmeric and leaves of the *cherula*, as well as balls of boiled rice with a few gingelly grains and curds poured over it. As boys are forbidden to make the offerings, should the nephew chance to be a boy, it is considered sufficient for him to touch one of the elders who, under those circumstances, makes the offerings. The whole is then covered with a plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved near it, and some milk is poured under the leaf. This is left undisturbed for some seconds, after which the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand; it is then removed and torn in two at its mid-rib, one piece being placed on either side of the *pindams*. And now the ceremony is over for the day. The agnates rise and remove their wet clothing, sometimes even bathe again. The torn cloth is tied round a pillar near the basket covering the leaf, and the leaf is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour for the performance of the ceremony. At the end of each day's ceremony the offerings of rice balls left are unguarded for a short time to allow the crows to feed on them: after which they are removed by the female members of the *tarawád*, who are junior to the deceased, and the eldest of them carries the offerings to the side of a tank [825] and throws them into the water. It is believed that if the [775] crows take them, the spirit is pleased. Should the crows leave [231] any remains, they must be thrown into the water, as dogs must not eat the offerings.

765 783 613 574 During the seven days the house of the deceased and all its inmates are considered to be under pollution, and the members of that *tarawád* may not go to any other house nor can members of other *tarawáds* visit them without polluting themselves; but this pollution can be removed by bathing. During this period, however, as a rule, the *káranavan* of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is at home on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Here it must be said, that in some cases, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or in kind to help the *káranavan* with the expenditure to which the funeral rites put him.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

below it, to cover the upper part of the body, and traces of the same custom can still be found among other Dravidian tribes, some of them being people who are anything but uncivilized. The prohibition applies both to males and females. Men moreover cannot wear caps, turbans or shoes, and must divest themselves of these luxuries, when they meet their elders, even though the meeting takes place in the middle of the road. Until 1865, it was forbidden by law for women of the Chóvans and of those of the lower castes to wear any clothing above the loins. The present generation of Nayar women, except perhaps the servants and the poor, have taken to the use of an upper garment and petticoat, in the same way as the Nayar males now freely use a second cloth. Young girls wear a piece of cloth round the loins, while those of four and five years of age wear a small strip of cloth, or a piece of the bark of areca palm. Generally young children of both sexes go about naked.

The subject of hair-dressing and personal adornment is more psychological and ethnological than hygienic. The Nayar women take special care in the growth and preservation of their hair. They use a kind of medicinal oil to improve its growth, and to keep it smooth and shiny. Many a young woman's plait of hair reaches the knee or even lower, and this adds greatly to her beauty. The hair is parted in the middle and tied either tight to the ears or twisted up in front in a sort of cone or sometimes tied into a knot behind.

Jewellery.

The Nayar women are fond of jewellery. They are no doubt partial to gold, but unlike their Brahman sisters they wear very few ornaments for daily use. The oldest ornament of the Nayar lady is the *nágapatam* or serpent's hood, so called from the shape of the pendant. The ear-ornament is the *thóda*, which is a double convex disc, the front surface of which is either plain or set with rubies, for the wearing of which the ear-lobes are sufficiently dilated. This dilating process begins at a very early age, and the ear-lobes, in the case of a majority of the women, become so far distended as to make it possible to wear *thódas* of more than an inch in diameter. The tendency at present is to wear small ones which do not require much dilation. Then come the ornaments for the nose which are *múkkuthi* and *nathu*. These do not find favour with the young women of these days, and what is called the nose-screw set with a ruby has taken their place.

Appendix 5

Lists of Trees and other Produce Found in Kerala Along with their Present Uses

824
313

E denotes Evergreen; *D* denotes Deciduous; *H* denotes Hardwood; *S* denotes Softwood

Malayalam name	*Botanical name*	*E* or *D*	*S* or *H*	*Uses*
1	2	3	4	5
1. *Teak*	*Tectona grandis*	D	H	Construction, furniture
2. *Mathi (Thembavu)*	*Terminalia tomentosa*	D	H	Construction, sleepers, etc.
3. *Maruthu*	*Terminalia paniculata*	D	H	-do-
4. *Venteak*	*Lagerstromia Lanceolata*	D	H	Boat-building, ceilings
5. *Venga*	*Pterocarpus Marsupium*	D	H	Building construction good substitute for teak
6. *Manjakadamba*	*Adina cordifolia*	D	H	Bobbins and furniture
7. *Rosewood*	*Dalbergia latifolia*	D	H	Furniture, plywood, export size above 72" midgirth
8. *Chadachi (Unnam)*	..	D	H	Furniture
9. *Kunnivega*	*Albizia Odoratissima*	D	H	Building construction
10. *Aini or (Anjili)*	*Artocarpus hirsuta*	E	H	-do-, Good substitute for teak, boat-building furniture
11. *Irimbagam or (Nanga)*	*Mesua Ferrea*	E	H	Sleepers
12. *Mahogany*	*Swietina antocarpa*	E	H	Furniture
13. *Wattle*	*Acacia molissima*	D	H	Being introduced for tan bark
14. *Ambazham*	*Spondeas mangifera*	D	S	Packing cases
15. *Chemi*	*Tetramoles nudiflora*	E	S	Packing cases
16. *Mani Maruthi*	*Lagerstromia flosreginae*	E	S	Building construction
17. *Chavapiru*	*Hardwickiea binata*	D	H	Packing cases, plywood
18. *Chavvangil*	*Cedrela toona*	D	H	Furniture

(Continued)

[PP 313-328 not Processed]

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

Appendix 5 (*Continued*)

1	2	3	4	5
19. *Mula*	*Dendrocalmus*			Bamboos for cheap housing, raw material for paper and rayon
20. *Pala*	*Alstonia scholaris*	E	S	Packing cases
21. *Irool*	*Xylia Xylocarpa*	D	H	Railway sleepers, building construction
22. *Kalpine*	*Dipterocarpus indicus*	E	S	Plywood
23. *Konna*	*Cassia fistula*	D	S	Tanning
24. *Vellangil* (*white cedar*)	*Dysoxylum malabaricum*	E	H	Plywood and furniture
25. *Nellika*	*Phyllanthus emblica*	E	H	Fruits for pickling and for Ayurvedic medicines
26. *Maruvetti*	*Hypocarpus wightiana*	E	H	Soap-making, oil used for lighting purpose
27. *Eta reed*	*Ochlandra Travancoria and Readi*			Raw material for paper
28. *Padiri*	*Stereospermum Chelonoidis*	E	S	Packing cases
29. *Pilavu*	*Artocarpus integrifolia*	D	H	Building construction, boat-making, furniture, etc.
30. *Poola* (*Elavu*)	*Salmalia Malabaricum*	D	S	Matchwood, cotton used for pillows
31. *Poocam*	*Schleichera trijuga*	D	H	For lac cultivation
32. *Punna*	*Calophylum tamentosa*	E	H	Plywood and cheap timber for construction purposes
33. *Kanjiram*	*Hopea parviflora*	E	H	Building construction, sleepers, etc.
34. *Vakkai*	*Sterculia Villosa*			Cember Bark (fibre) used for making ropes for timber dragging purposes
35. *Chaktaka*	*Colonia ovalis*	E	S	Plywood
36. *Vellapine*	*Vatteria indica*	E	S	A favourite plywood species
37. *Mathi*	*Ailanthus malabaricum* (*ovalis*)	D	S	Matchwood
38. *Pali*	*Palaquim Elipticum*	E	S	Plywood
39. *Kulamavu*	*Machilus Macrantha*	E	S	-do-
40. *Mavu*	*Mangifera indica*	E	S	Plywood, boat-building, packing cases
41. *Kalamucha*	*Anacolosa densiflora*	E	S	Plywood
42. *Kayari* (*chera*)	*Callenia ovalis*	E	S	-do-
43. *Shaveli*	*Hardwicka Pinnata*	E	S	-do-

(*Continued*)

11: India . G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

Appendix 5 (Continued)

1	2	3	4	5
44. ..	*Eucalyptus grandis*	E	S	Pulp timber
45. *Blue gum*	*E. Globulus*	E	S	Pulp timber
46. *Cashew*	*Anacardium Occidentale*	E	H	Nuts and apple
47. *Kadukka*	*Terminalia Chebula, and belerica*	D	H	Myrobalans
48. *Punnappamaram*	*Delenia pantagyna*	D	H	House construction
49. *Vekkali*	*Anogeissi latifolia*	D	H	Mine props
50. *Nedunar*	*Polialthia fragrans*	E	S	Masts and packing cases
51. *Nedunar*	*Polialthia fragrans*	E	H	Cabinet-making and furniture
52. *Malavappu*	*Chukrasia tabularis*	E	H	-do-
53. *Chenkurunthi*	*Elattraconcris*	E	H	-do-
54. *Venkotta*	*Lophopetlum wightianum*	E	S	Plywood
55. *Puli*	*Tamarindus indica*	D	E	Fruit good glue material, Bobbins
56. *Aval*	*Holoptelea integrifolia*	E	S	Box and packing cases
57. *Black dammar*	*Canarium strictum*	E	S	Packing cases
58. *Papitta*	*Sterculia compaulata*	E	S	Matchwood, packing cases
59. *Kambli (Nasakam)*	*Evodia roxburghiana*	E	S	Matchwood
60. *Vella Kamadamba*	*Hymenodictun excelsa*	D	S	Bobbins
61. *Poovarsu*	*Thespesia populnea*	D	H	Shuttles
62. *Datapala*	*Wightia tinctoria*	D	H	Combs, and carvings
63. ..	*Gmelina arborium*	D	H	Musical instruments
64. *Punga*	*Pongamia glabra*	D	H	Oil seeds
65. *Mukayini*	*Bridelia retusa*	D	H	Tans and dyes
66. *Chandu*	*Caulpinia sappan*	D	H	Dyes
67. *Udi*	*Odina wodier*	D	H	Gum used for curving fishermen's nets

Source: Department of Forests, Government of Kerala.

313
314
824

588 death pollution when her Manavālan dies. The same [765] Manavālan may tie the tāli on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at any other time, and he [793] may be old or young. He is often an elderly holy Brāh- [564] man, who receives a small present for his services. The girl may remove the tāli, if she likes, after the fourth day. [184] In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the man who performs the rôle of Manavālan is considered to have some right to the girl, but in such case it has been already considered that he is a proper man to enter into sambandham with her."

588 184 Of the tāli-kattu kalyānam in Malabar, the following detailed account, mainly furnished by an Urāli Nāyar of Calicut, is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "An auspicious time has to be selected for the purpose, and the preliminary consultation of the astrologer is in itself the occasion of a family gathering. The Manavālan or quasi-bridegroom is chosen at the same time. For the actual kalyānam, two pandals (booths), a small one inside a large one, are erected in front of the padinhātta macchu or central room of the western wing. They are decorated with cloth, garlands, lamps and palm leaves, and the pillars should be of areca palm cut by an Asāri [778] on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday. The first day's [789] ceremonies open with a morning visit to the temple, where the officiating Brāhman pours water sanctified by mantrams (religious formulæ), and the addition of leaves of mango, peepul and darbha, over the girl's head. This [354] rite is called kalasam maduga. The girl then goes home, and is taken to the macchu, where a hanging lamp with five wicks is lighted. This should be kept alight [352] during all the days of the kalyānam. The girl sits on a [824] piece of pala (*Alstonia scholaris*) wood, which is called a mana. She is elaborately adorned, and some castes [301]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

Malabar. "The first regular ceremony performed during pregnancy is known as pulikudi or drinking tamarind, which corresponds to the Pumsavanam of the Brâhmans. But there are other observances of less importance, which commonly, if not invariably, precede this, and may be considered as corresponding to the Garbharakshana (embryo or womb protection) ceremony sometimes performed by Brâhmans, though not one of the obligatory sacraments. Sometimes the pregnant woman is made to consume daily a little ghee (clarified butter), which has been consecrated by a Nambûdiri with appropriate mantrams. Sometimes exorcists of the lower castes, such as Pânans, are called in, and perform a ceremony called Balikkala, in which they draw magic patterns on the ground, into which the girl throws lighted wicks, and sing rude songs to avert from the unborn babe the unwelcome attentions of evil spirits, accompanying them on a small drum called tudi, or with bell-metal cymbals. The ceremony concludes with the sacrifice of a cock, if the woman is badly affected by the singing. The pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month. An auspicious hour has to be selected by the village astrologer for this as for most ceremonies. A branch of a tamarind tree should be plucked by the pregnant woman's brother, who should go to the tree with a kindi (bell-metal vessel) of water, followed by an Enangatti* carrying a hanging lamp with five wicks (tukkuvilakku), and, before plucking it, perform three pradakshinams round it. In the room in which the ceremony is to be

* An Enangan or Inangan is a man of the same caste and sub-division or marriage group. It is usually translated "kinsman," but is at once wider and narrower in its connotation. My Enangans are all who can marry the same people that I can. An Enangatti is a female member of an Enangan's family.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

843 performed, usually the vadakkini, there is arranged a mat, the usual lamp (nilavilakku) with five wicks, and a para measure of rice (niracchaveppu), also the materials necessary for the performance of Ganapathi pūja (worship of the god Ganēsa), consisting of plantains, brown sugar, leaves of the sacred basil or tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*), sandal paste, and the eight spices called [593] ashtagantham. The woman's brother performs Ganapathi pūja, and then gives some of the tamarind leaves to the Enangatti, who expresses their juice, and mixes it with [824] that of four other plants.* The mixture is boiled with a little rice, and the brother takes a little of it in a jack [602] (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaf folded like a spoon, and lets it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's mouth. He does this three times. Then the mixture is administered in the same manner by some woman of the husband's family, and then by an Ammāyi (wife of [574] one of the members of the girl's tarwad). The branch is then planted in the nadumittam, and feasting brings the ceremony to a close. The above description was obtained from an Urali Nāyar of Calicut taluk. In other localities and castes, the details vary considerably. [564] Sometimes the mixture is simply poured into the woman's mouth, instead of being dripped off a knife. Some castes use a small spoon of gold or silver instead of the jack leaves. In South Malabar there is not as a rule any procession to the tamarind tree. Among Agathu Charna Nāyars of South Malabar, the ceremony takes place in the nadumittam, whither the tamarind branch is brought by a Tiyan. The girl carries a valkannadi or bell-metal mirror, a charakkōl or arrow, and a pisankatti (knife). An Enangatti pours some oil

184
843
564

[137] * The aimpuli or "five tamarinds" are *Tamarindus indica*, *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Spondias mangifera*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Hibiscus hirtus*.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers, and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, "women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she again plunges in the water, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All the members of the taravād observe pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar. Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed at some famous temple, that at Guruvayûr being a favourite one for this purpose." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice-giving ceremony is usually performed by taking the child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places, the child is named on the chorûn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and childhood, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the Attikurissi or Mârayan caste among Nâyars, or of the barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies the mother, the other women of the household, and the room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchaveppu (1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice) placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed, the Mârayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the child two vessels, one containing water stained red with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with powdered charcoal.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

thorns. The wires or thorns are left in the ears. In the case of girls, the hole is subsequently gradually distended by the insertion of nine different kinds of thorns or plugs in succession, the last of which is a bamboo plug, till it is large enough to admit the characteristic Malayāli ear ornament, the boss-shaped toda."

Of the death ceremonies among the Nāyars of Malabar, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Fawcett. "When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, and the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one, pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring, the idea being that the person should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the taravād is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin (a rāsi fanam, if one can be procured) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house), where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and, while it is in the room, whether by day or night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the taravād holds the head in his lap, and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead. As the Malayālis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of the taravād, male or female, are burned, those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of plantain tree, one at each end, and one in the middle, on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used, should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. This individual is throughout chief among the offerers of pindam (balls of rice) to the deceased. The corpse is laid on the bier with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it, and a little camphor, sandal-wood and ghī (clarified butter); if these things are within the means of the taravād. Here must be stated the invariable rule that no member of the taravād, male or female, who is older than the deceased, shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre ; failing a son, the next junior in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of greatest

* The eldest male member of the taravād is called the Karanavan. All male members, brothers, nephews, and so on, who are junior to him, are called Anandravans of the taravād.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

"if the Census Commissioner had enjoyed the privilege of living among the Nāyars, he would not have accused them of an 'excess of females.' The most beautiful women in India, if numerous, could never be excessive." Concerning Nāyar females, Pierre Loti writes* that "les femmes ont presque toutes les traits d'une finesse particulière. Elles se font des bandeaux a la Vierge, et, avec le reste de leurs cheveux, très noirs et très lisses, composent une espèce de galette ronde qui se porte au sommet de la tête, en avant et de côté, retombant un peu vers le front comme une petite toque cavalièrement posée, en contraste sur l'ensemble de leur personne qui demeure toujours grave et hiératique."] The Nāyars are particularly cleanly. Buchanan writes that "the higher ranks of the people of Malayala use very little clothing, but are remarkably clean in their persons. Cutaneous disorders are never observed except among slaves and the lowest orders, and the Nāyar women are remarkably careful, repeatedly washing with various saponaceous plants to keep their hair and skins from every impurity." The washerman is constantly in requisition. No dirty cloths are ever worn. When going for temple worship, the Nāyar women dress themselves in the tattu form by drawing the right corner of the hind fold of the cloth between the thighs, and fastening it at the back. The cloth is about ten cubits long and three broad, and worn in two folds. The oldest ornament of the Nāyar women is the necklace called nāgapatam, the pendants of which resemble a cobra's hood. The Nāyar women wear no ornament on the head, but decorate the hair with flowers. The nāgapatam, and several other forms of neck ornament, such as kazhultila, nalupanti, puttali,

* L'Inde (sans les Anglais).

796 eighteenth century, observes that about the tenth of September the rain ceases in Malabar. All nature seems then as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up, and the trees bloom. In a word, this season is the same as that which Europeans call spring. The Ōnam festival is said, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the gods a happy and fruitful [237] year. It continues for eight days, and during that time the Indians are accustomed to adorn their houses with [825] flowers, and to daub them over with cow-dung, because the cow is a sacred animal, dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, the Ceres of India. On this occasion they also put on new clothes, throw away all their old earthenware, and replace it by new. Ōnam is, according to some, the annual celebration of the Malabar new year, which first began with Cheraman Perumal's departure for Mecca. But, with the majority of orthodox Hindus, it is the day of the annual visit of Mahabali to his country, which he used to govern so wisely and well before his overthrow. There is also a belief that it is Maha-Vishnu who, on Ōnam day, pays a visit to this mundane universe, for the just and proper maintenance of which he is specially responsible. In some North Malabar title-deeds and horoscopes, Mr. Logan says, the year is taken as ending with the day previous to Ōnam. This fact, he notes, is quite reconcileable with the other explanation, which alleges that the commencement of the era coincides with Perumal's departure for Arabia, if it is assumed, as is not improbable, that the day on which he sailed was Thiruvōnam day, on which acknowledgment of fealty should have been made. Ōnam, it may be observed, is a contraction of Thiruvōnam which is the asterism [824] of the second day of the festival. Throughout the festival, boys from five to fifteen years of age go out

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

early in the morning to gather flowers, of which the kadali is the most important. On their return, they sit in front of the tulasi (sacred basil) mandapam, make a carpet-like bed of the blossoms which they have collected, and place a clay image of Ganapati in the centre. A writer in the Calcutta Review * describes how having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M., and then the daily decoration begins. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers, and one or two varieties of foliage of different tints, are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art, accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal (booth), hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork."

"Various field sports, of which foot-ball is the chief, are indulged in during the Ônam festival. To quote Paulinus once more, the men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into parties, and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted, but exceedingly strong, and are discharged with such force that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the Ceralia and Juvenalia of the ancient Greeks and Romans."

* January, 1899.